

U.S. News & World Report

WASHINGTON

2300 N STREET, N.W. • WASHINGTON, D.C. 20037

May 2, 1977

Admiral Stansfield Turner
Director of Central Intelligence
Washington, D. C. 20505

Dear Stan:

Enclosed is the edited version of the interview with you which we are planning to publish in the next issue of the magazine. Please go through it and make any corrections that are required.

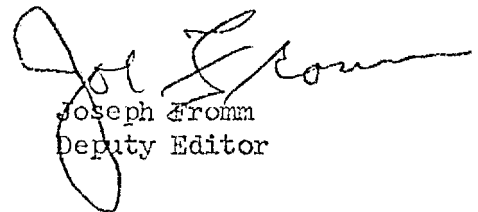
In view of developments in Ethiopia in recent days I think that it is important that we deal with that situation in connection with Soviet activities in Africa. I suggest that we insert questions on page 10 before the question on the Cubans. If you could dictate answers to the following two questions we will insert them there: (1) What about Ethiopia? Are the Russians establishing another foothold in Africa at the expense of the U.S.? (2) Is this a serious setback for the U.S.?

I would appreciate it if we could have your corrected copy of the interview together with the additional questions and answers by Tuesday night, if possible, or, at the very latest, first thing Wednesday morning. If you will have Herb Hetu's office phone me -- 333-7400, Ext. 575 -- when the approved version of the interview is ready we will arrange to have it picked up promptly.

Again, Stan, I'm most grateful that you were able to get over here to our office for the interview, which, I think, provides an authoritative and highly informative overview of the world scene.

With kindest personal regards, I am

Sincerely,


Joseph Fromm
Deputy Editor

JF:h
Enclosure

U.S. NEWS & WORLD REPORT

Washington, D.C.
April 22, 1977

ORIGINAL
TRANSCRIPT

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Q Admiral Turner, do you agree with the view expressed by some high officials in recent years that the Soviet Union is an ascending power and the U.S. is declining?

A The Soviets have their strengths and they have their weaknesses. ~~XXX~~ Their weaknesses are in economics and politics. I don't see ~~xxx~~ the Soviet economy ~~ix~~ climbing to outdistance us. Our lead is so great that they cannot hope to overtake us unless our percentage of growth every year ~~was~~ were to be a lot smaller than theirs. And that is not happening. So in terms of raw economic power we are not a declining power.

As for ideology, the Russians may think it is a strength for them but I am sure we would all agree that their ideology is hamstringing them in many ways. After all, what's left of pure Marxism? Where is it practiced or believed in? You have a different brand of Communism in every country in Europe -- and a different brand in Yugoslavia, a different

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brand in China. Even in the Soviet Union, they don't hold to it very carefully. So -- no, I don't think the Soviets are on the ascendancy ideologically.

Q And militarily?

A They have a strong military position. One of the reasons they are putting such emphasis on their military strength is that they are trying to convert ~~xxx~~ military power into ~~xx~~ political advantage. They have no other strengths that they can exploit in Africa and elsewhere. Military is all ~~that~~ they have.

Q Is the U.S. falling behind Russia in military power?

A In my view, we still have the edge in the strategic nuclear field as a result of our preponderance of warheads ~~the~~ and accuracy of our missiles. However, the trends are moving in the other direction because of the substantial effort the Soviets are putting into strategic weapons. If that continues, they ~~xxxx~~ could close the warhead gap and outdistance us in what is known as throw weight. The complex equation

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as to when those trends might give the Soviets a militarily superior position is very difficult to state -- given the fact that you're balancing numbers of warheads, accuracies and throw weight in the same mix.

Q Are the Soviets near the point where they could knock out our land-based missile force with a first-strike attack as some strategists claim?

A I don't see a first strike as being anything like a rational calculation in the years immediately ahead by either

side. XX

~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~ What concerns me is the image that is created and the impact this could have on world opinion if there is a perceived imbalance in favor of the Soviets in strategic nuclear power.

that first.

So I think, ~~XXXXXX~~ we must understand the nuclear stra-

tegic equation as best we can. And, ^{second} ~~XXX~~, the United States

balance
must not let it get out of ~~whack~~ in fact or in perception.

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that
I don't think/the people of this country are going to let
the Soviets outdistance us in a dangerous way. But we've
got to be vigilant as to that.

Q We've heard a great deal lately about Russia's massive
civil defense program. Is there any danger that this will
give them a decisive strategic advantage over us?

A Certainly not at the present time. I don't believe that
the Soviets are ~~anywhere~~ ^{XXXXXXXXXX} near the point in civil defense
that
where they could think/they could absorb a nuclear blow
from us with reasonable loss -- that is, a loss they would
be willing to accept. It doesn't seem to me that the damage
to the three ingredients that civil defense protects --
leadership, population and productive capacity -- could be
estimated by the Soviets to be small enough to make it an
acceptable risk for them to initiate a nuclear war with
deliberateness.

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Q Aside from the idea of a "first strike," are the Soviets

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thinking and planning in terms of actually fighting a nuclear war rather than just deterring one?

A The difference that I note between them and us is this: The Soviets in their planning start with cold war and think the process through all the way to a strategic nuclear war and even to a postwar recovery. We, on the other hand, tend to think ~~only~~ from cold war to deterrence. There's less emphasis in our thinking on what happens after the nuclear weapons start going off because the idea is so abhorrent.

It's a different psychological attitude. Maybe it comes from the fact that the Russians are from a country that's been attacked and overrun a number of times in their memory. So they have more of an inclination to think through the implications of someone attacking them.

Q Are they more inclined to contemplate resorting to nuclear war to achieve their political objectives?

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A I think not. I think they have shown a rational, sensible

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approach to the nuclear weapons problem -- a willingness,
for example, to negotiate SALT-type agreements.

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Q In your opinion, where do the Soviets pose the greatest threat for the United States today?

A Well, you have to break that down between where our greatest interest is and where their greatest opportunity

We have a vital national
is. /XXXXXXXXXXXX interest ~~xx~~ in Western Europe -- in maintaining the NATO fabric whole and strong. The Soviet Union is trying hard to build up enough military power in Europe to give the impression that they can dominate that area. With ~~an~~ ~~xxxx~~ intimidating force on their side, they want to fracture the NATO alliance from within by undermining the resolve of the NATO allies. That is ~~the~~ ^a ~~xxx~~ ~~most~~ serious threat -- but not the most urgent.

The Soviets are pressing hardest at the moment in Africa.

So, in that sense, Africa is the most urgent threat. But

is not as vital a national interest
clearly Africa/~~has xxxxxxxxxx the importance to us as xxxxx~~

as is
~~xxxxxxx~~ Europe ~~xxx~~.

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Q What's the Soviet objective in Africa?

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A I think that all over the world the basically imperialistic thrust of the Soviet Union is one of opportunism. They are very adroit in the sense of pushing their opportunities wherever they develop, but not pushing them to the point where it involves a major commitment of Soviet resources or prestige if they fail. They've found that NATO has stymied their imperialistic expansionism in Western Europe. And so they're probing each opportunity that comes up anywhere to get a foothold or friendship.

Somalia is an example of how this works. The Soviets start with a fishing fleet calling in at a Somali~~an~~ port. Then they offer aid to the Somali~~an~~ Army. The army stages a coup and a general takes over as President of the country. Then the Soviets build the fishing port into a naval base -- and on and on in gradual steps. They look constantly for an opportunity for that first step -- a fishing agreement or a trade agreement -- and then they just keep pushing

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but without ~~committing~~ themselves in a major way.

Q How successful have they been with this strategy?

A Only moderately successful. They've established three
toeholds that seem to be useful to them in Africa. They've
had a toehold in Guinea for six years or so and seem to
be hanging on there. They've had one for a short time in
Angola and they're doing all right there. There's no major
Soviet presence but the Angolans are still co-operating
with them. And the Soviets have had a fairly strong posi-
tion in Somalia for seven or eight years and it seems to
be holding. They're beginning to explore other opportuni-
ties -- for example, in southern and eastern Africa with
the visit of President Podgorny.

On the other hand, the Russians have failed in Egypt.
They've lost a major position there. Outside Africa, they
failed some years ago in Indonesia. Their relations with
Syria are not as warm as they were several years ago. So

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they are not always adroit enough to do this well. Basically they lack the economic foundation to be an imperialistic power.

Q Are the Russians using Cuba in black Africa as a Soviet tool or are the Cubans there for their own ends?

A I think it's a fine line. The Cubans are anxious to establish themselves as a leader in the third world. The
of non-aligned nations. Thus
1979 ~~non-aligned~~ conference/will be held in Havana. /~~XXX~~
the Cubans are anxious to raise their world image in Africa and elsewhere in the third world. However, I don't think that they could afford economically to indulge in these activities without considerable support from the Soviet Union. The Russians, by operating with a surrogate, get an opportunity to establish an African foothold without necessarily committing themselves too much.

Q Admiral Turner, why are we so worried about the Indian Ocean considering the relative weakness of Soviet naval

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strength there?

A I wouldn't say their naval strength is relatively weak there. ~~xxxxxx loading xxx~~ At the same time, I wouldn't say that the Soviet naval presence is formidable compared with ours, which is somewhat smaller. The difference is not overwhelming. The asymmetry that impresses me is that the United States as well as Western Europe and Japan have a vital interest in the Indian Ocean -- in the oil route which is vital to our future prosperity and security -- while the Soviet Union does not have a vital interest there.

Q In that case, why do the Russians maintain a naval force there?

A I think their presence in the Indian Ocean is symptomatic of their desire to leapfrog out to gain influence in other areas of the world while they're stalemated in Europe.

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Now, you can talk about their continuing naval presence

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in the Mediterranean as a counter to the U.S. position in the Mediterranean. You can talk about their continuing naval presence in the Norwegian Sea and the Sea of Japan as legitimate defensive concerns close to their homeland. But you can only look at a continuing Soviet presence off West Africa and in the Indian Ocean as ~~offensive~~ gunboat diplomacy. ~~for action type operations~~ I don't say that this is malicious or bad. But I am saying it's indicative of a change in strategy dictated by the fact that they are blocked on land.

Q Do you see any danger that the Russians will be able to break the stalemate in Europe to their advantage?

A No, at this point I don't, although I recognize that some of our allies are facing difficult political and economic problems today.

Q What about the situation in Eastern Europe? How dangerous is it for the Soviets?

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A It varies from country to country. Since Helsinki there has been a stirring of thought behind the Iron Curtain. Yet, basically one has the feeling that the dictatorial controls in those countries will be exercised ruthlessly as requirements dictate. There could be internal problems for the Soviets -- as there have been in Hungary and Poland and Czechoslovakia. But I don't see a real possibility of a major fracturing of the Soviet bloc.

Q Do you expect the Soviets to make a grab for Yugoslavia after Tito's death?

A I think that Yugoslavia is the most fragile point in the European scene today. I would think that the Soviets would look for an opportunity and probe without getting themselves overcommitted.

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Q Do you anticipate a Russian military move to force Yugoslavia back into the Soviet bloc?

A That would be a very definite commitment by the Soviets and it would be taken only as a last resort. They would try a lot of other things first before they contemplated that.

Q Turning to Russia's other flank -- in the Far East -- are the Soviets and Chinese likely to patch up their quarrel in the near future?

A That is always a possibility when you are dealing with countries that operate on such an expedient basis as the Soviets did in their relations with Nazi Germany before World War II. But I don't see it on the immediate horizon. Even if it happened, I doubt if it would be anything more than an expedient. The fissure between these two countries is quite deep.

Q President Carter proposes to withdraw U.S. ground forces

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from South Korea. Will that affect China's relations with Russia or its attitude toward this country?

A Of course, it ^{would} ~~will~~ have an effect on Chinese attitudes if that decision ^{were} ~~is~~ made and executed. How important it would ~~XXXX~~ be will be largely dependent on how and when a withdrawal takes place -- if it does -- and what changes occur on the world scene in the interim. It's pretty difficult to speculate in the abstract until some policy decision is made here as to how and when it's going to take place -- if it does.

Q Will such a withdrawal be seen as an American retreat from Asia by Japan and other U.S. allies?

A Again, it depends on how it's done and whether the preparatory steps can persuade those countries that it's not a retreat from Asia. Those who are looking to us for a security function out there would be bound to think of it as something of a retreat. But the status quo is not always

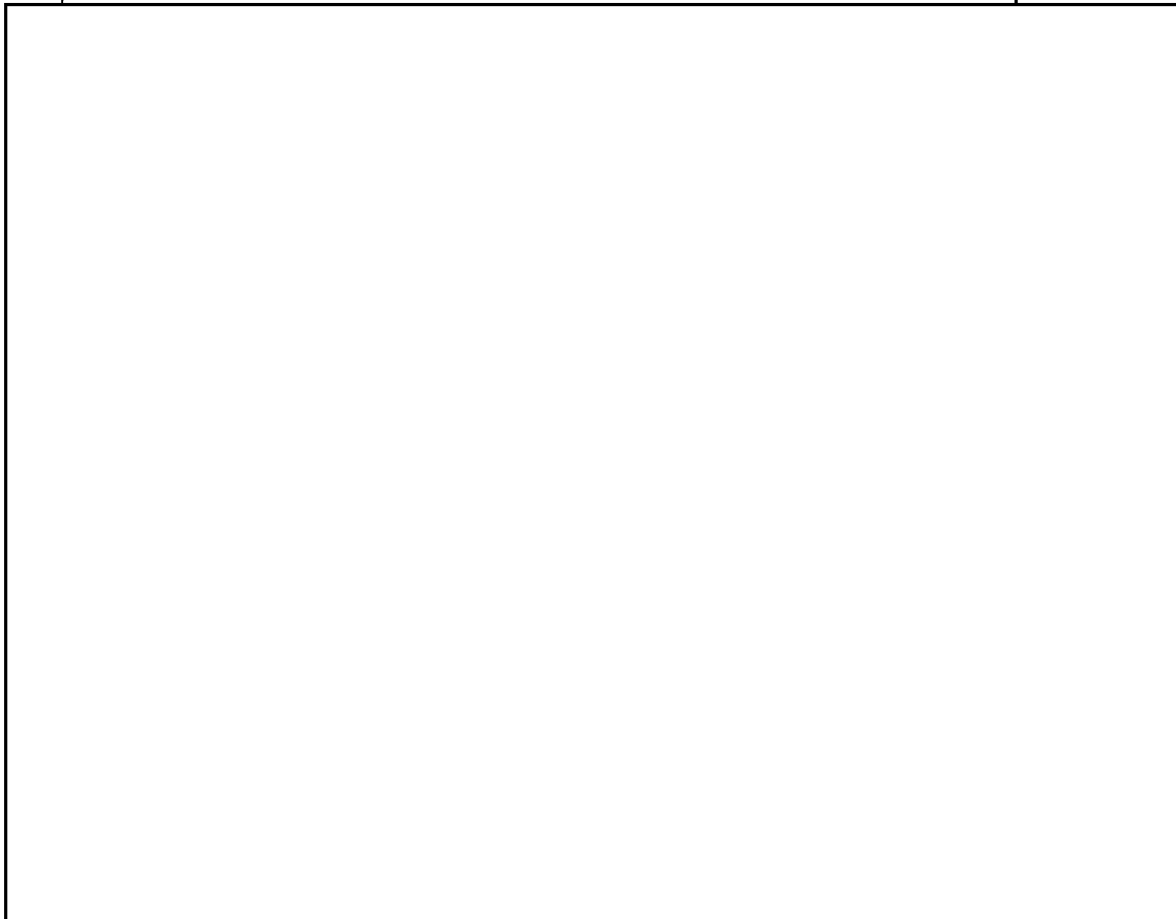
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the right answer. Anytime you change something it's going to be approved by some and disapproved by others.

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Q One further point about the Soviet Union: What is your reading of Brezhnev's health? Is he about finished as recent reports suggest?

A My reading of Brezhnev's health is that it's a sine curve that goes up and down. Sometimes he wears himself out a bit or he has a particular problem, but I don't see this as

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a ~~xxxx~~ curve that's constantly declining and has a terminal date that can be anticipated. It's not such that we have to sit here and plan, "Well, in 12 months or 24 months we're bound to have somebody new."

Q Are there any signs of a power struggle for the succession in the Kremlin?

A No, I don't read the signs that way at this point.

Q Would a leadership change have any significant effect on Soviet-American relations?

A Yes, it's bound to. With a new Administration here in Washington beginning to establish an understanding with the

Brezhnev Administration ~~xxxx~~ in Moscow, ~~it would be seen~~

~~xxxx set back~~ we would have to start over and feel out a

new administration over there. There would bound to be some slowdown in the development of enough understanding to proceed with things like SALT.

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Q Turning to your own situation at the CIA, Admiral Turner:

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Are you handicapped in countering Soviet and Cuban activities in Africa by restrictions on covert operations?

A No, I've not found them a handicap at this point. ~~XX~~

~~XXXXXX~~ There are no new limitations on our covert operations, other than specific prohibitions on

~~XX~~

~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ assassinations, ~~XX~~

I would not permit that kind of activity anyway. ~~XX~~ The point

now is that there must be presidential approval/ and Congress ^{before any covert action is undertaken}

must be informed in a timely manner.

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Q Are covert operations -- dirty tricks of that sort -- really necessary?

A We can't abandon covert action. However, in today's atmosphere, there is less likelihood that we would want to use this capability for covert action. But I can envisage

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circumstances in which the country might demand some covert action.

Q What circumstances?

A For instance, let's say a terrorist group appears with a nuclear weapon and threatens one of our cities and says, "If you don't give us some money or release some prisoners or do something, we will blow up Washington, D. C." I think the country would be incensed if we did not have a covert-action capability to try to counter that, to go in and get the weapon or defuse it.

So, although we don't exercise it today, I think ^{we} ~~we~~ must ^{covert actions} retain some capability for ~~diverse~~ ^{covert actions} that range from small paramilitary operations to ~~selecting information~~ ^{actions} ~~and one thing and another~~ that will influence events.

Q What do you intend to do to rehabilitate the CIA after these past couple years of scandals and investigations?

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A The first thing I want to do is to get people to concen-

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trate on tomorrow -- focus on the future. Also I hope to
focus on more openness. I'd like to see the CIA give the
more visible and direct return for
taxpayer/~~xxxx xxxxxxxx~~ his money ~~directly~~ by providing
unclassified information that we have and that the citizens
of this country would find valuable. We can make informa-
tion available on ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ subjects, like the
strategic balance.

Insert new piece I
wrote

Finally, I hope that we can remove some of the mystique
covert actions
from the CIA so that people understand that ~~dirty tricks~~
For instance,
are under very close control./ If any member of the intel-
ligence community thinks that I am doing anything improper,
he can go directly to an oversight board without telling
me and say, "Turner is up to something he shouldn't be up
to." I intend to continue emphasizing strongly propriety
and legality.

(END INTERVIEW)

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Herbert E. Hetu
Assistant for Public Affairs

NEW Q + A WRITTEN
BY DCI AT JOE
FROMM'S INVITATION -
COULD BE SUBSTITUTED
FOR THE LAST Q + A
AS IT NOW APPEARS

Q: Your declassification of the reports on energy appear to be part of a new policy of using intelligence to support policy decisions. Is that the case?

A. That is definitely not the case. This study was started over a year ago, before even the election. The President did not know of it until a few days before he mentioned it in a press conference. Let me say, though, that I believe that the Intelligence Community should make more information available to the public on an unclassified basis. The public is paying for our work and deserves to benefit from it within the necessary limits of secrecy. Moreover, a well informed public is the greatest strength of our nation. I also believe that declassifying as much information as possible is a good way to provide better protection for those secrets we must hold. Excessive classification simply breeds disrespect for and abuse of all classified data. I intend to continue to declassify and publish information of value and interest to our people.

Q. What about Ethiopia? Are the Russians establishing another toehold in Africa at the expense of the U.S.?

A. There is no doubt that Soviet ties with Ethiopia's present Leftist regime are close. At the same time, however, the apparent Soviet gains in Ethiopia may lead to a deterioration in its formerly close relations with Somalia.

Q. Is this a serious setback for the U.S.?

A. The policy followed by the present Ethiopian government since it came to power in 1974 has been increasingly Leftist and anti-Western, as well as being in violation of the most basic human rights within Ethiopia. While we regret to see a loosening in our long-standing ties with the Ethiopian people, it is unlikely -- given the present regime in Addis Ababa -- that the U.S. could have prevented this cooling in relations. We can hope for an eventual restoration of friendly links to Ethiopia.

- Q. What truth is there to the report that the Russians have made a breakthrough in developing a beam that could destroy all of our missiles?
- A. The question of Soviet development of a charged particle beam weapon has been the subject of intensive analysis for a number of years. All the results of these studies have been made available to high-level U.S. Government officials on a continuing basis. The Central Intelligence Agency does not believe the Soviet Union has achieved a breakthrough which could lead to a charged particle beam weapon capable of neutralizing ballistic missiles. This question is obviously of concern to the U.S. Government and is continually under review by all members of the Intelligence Community.

~~Soc~~ News
World Report

P- Fromm, Joseph
(orig under Soc)



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Herbert E. Hetu
Assistant for Public Affairs

5-4-77

Joe -

Here is corrected
interview - an additional
A + A which Stan wrote at
your invitation - the answers
to the Ethiopian questions
posed in your letter - and
lastly, your answer on the
Soviet beam development (as
reported)

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PROPOSED ANSWERS TO
ETHIOPIAN QUESTIONS —
PREPARED BY DDI —
NEED TO BE TURNERIZED

}

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MEMORANDUM FOR: Mr Heta

Attached are proposed
answers to the US News
two additional questions.

This has been coordinated
with ORPA --- [REDACTED]
is the Ethiopian expert.

[REDACTED]

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